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President Shelly Reacts to the Use of Code Name “Geronimo” by U.S. Military Forces

“As the leader of the largest Indian nation in America, I am appalled and disappointed that United States Military leaders would dishonor the legacy of war leader—Geronimo and the Apache tribes. As well as, all Native American service men and women and our own Navajo Nation Code Talkers, who have fought hard for the freedom of all Americans.

Throughout history, more Native Americans per capita have served our country with valor and dedication. It is not only disrespectful to Geronimo and the Navajo Nation Code Talkers, but to the 11 Navajo warriors who have recently lost their lives fighting against terrorism since 9/11. Still today, alongside other Indian Nations of the United States, we send our sons and daughters into conflict to fight for liberty, freedom, and justice.

To assign the operation code name ‘Geronimo’ to America’s most wanted terrorist, Osama bin Laden, is dehumanizing, unethical and perpetrates international ignorance toward every Native American living in the United States today.

The Navajo Nation respects the Apache tribes, as having some of the fiercest warriors and the finest light calvary the world has ever known.

Today, I ask President Obama and the Pentagon to change the operation code name ‘Geronimo’ from this day forward. So that U.S. history books will not continue to portray negative stereotypes of Native Americans and that America’s youth will remember Geronimo as one of our greatest war heroes.”

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